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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 31st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 76: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME FOR THE DECADE FOR ACTION TO COMBAT
RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 76: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME FOR THE DECADE FOR ACTION TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
(continued) (A/C.3/37/L.4 and L.10)

1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/37/L.4 and its financial implications, contained in document A/C.3/37/L.10. There were some technical drafting changes to be made in the draft resolution which would be read out by the Secretary of the Committee.
2. Mrs. DOWNING (Secretary of the Committee) read out a number of drafting changes to be made in paragraphs 5 and 6 in order to make the draft resolution conform to the usual practices regarding invitations to conferences. Should the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee, the Secretariat would ensure that those modifications were included in the final text.
3. The CHAIRMAN said that delegations might find the text, as amended, somewhat heavy. However, in issuing invitations to participants at conferences, the Secretariat had to ensure that those invitations were consistent with usual United Nations practice. There had been no substantive changes made, only technical ones to facilitate the work of the Secretariat.
4. Mr. AL-QAYSI (Iraq) drew attention to paragraph 1, which began with the word "endorses". The word used in the Arabic text was equivalent to "supports", which was much weaker than the word used in the English text; accordingly, the Arabic text should be corrected.
5. The CHAIRMAN said that as the Committee was aware, there had been difficulties in reaching agreement on the draft resolution. Extensive consultations had been held in a spirit of co-operation and conciliation, and as a result, he had been informed that changes in the draft had been agreed on in order to make it easier for the Committee to take a decision to convene the Second World Conference. The changes related essentially to the draft provisional agenda for the Conference. That draft had been approved by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1982/32 and was contained in the annex to the report of the Preparatory Sub-Committee for the Second World Conference (E/1982/26).
6. It was proposed that the draft provisional agenda should be annexed to the draft resolution, with the amendment that the full title of agenda item 10 would now read:

"10. Review and evaluation of activities undertaken to achieve the goals and objectives of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination at the national, regional and international levels and in implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the first World Conference."

(The Chairman)

7. Accordingly, the following new paragraph 5 would be included in draft resolution A/C.3/37/L.4, with the subsequent paragraphs being renumbered accordingly:

"5. Recommends the draft provisional agenda for the Conference as contained in the annex to the present resolution;"

8. That would provide better possibilities for the success of the Conference. He thanked all delegations that had worked to achieve the results obtained; their work had been a great contribution to the success of the Conference. He now hoped that the Committee would accept the amended draft resolution as the basis for its discussion. Lastly, he appealed to all delegations wishing to explain their votes to do so after the vote, for although the results achieved through the consultations were constructive, they were very fragile.

9. Mr. HUSAIN (Pakistan) said it seemed somewhat contradictory that the General Assembly should, in paragraph 1, endorse Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/32 while adopting a revision of the draft provisional agenda contained in that resolution.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that he would agree with the representative of Pakistan if paragraph 1 were to be interpreted strictly. However, it was clear from the text that a general endorsement was being given to the Economic and Social Council resolution with the modifications in the draft provisional agenda.

11. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) agreed with the interpretation given by the Chairman regarding the endorsement and amendment of Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/32.

12. The CHAIRMAN put the draft resolution, as amended, to the vote.

13. The draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/37/L.4, as amended, was adopted by 124 votes to 2.

14. Mr. JONAH (Secretary-General of the Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination) thanked all those representatives who had co-operated with the Chairman and himself in finding a way to adopt the draft resolution. Stressing that a difficult road lay ahead, he expressed the hope that the same spirit of co-operation would be shown in helping to ensure the success of the Conference. For his part, he would contact Governments to help promote the same goal.

15. Mr. BEIN (Israel), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote said that he appreciated all the efforts made to delete from the agenda of the Conference subjects which were irrelevant to its theme. However, the draft resolution still contained elements directly related to those subjects, the most blatant of them being the explicit invitation extended in paragraph 7 (i) to two committees dealing with subjects related to the two items deleted from the agenda. That invitation

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(Mr. Bein, Israel)

stood in direct contradiction to the purpose of the negotiations. If the intention was to avoid certain areas of controversy, it was paradoxical to invite observers whose only field of interest was the one the General Assembly did not wish to discuss. There was no reason whatsoever for inviting them. Accordingly, his delegation, therefore, had voted against the draft resolution.

16. Mr. FERGUSON (Australia) speaking on behalf of the delegations of Belgium, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom as well as his own, expressed his satisfaction that a compromise solution concerning the provisional agenda of the Conference had been found and his appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General of the Conference, who, with the support of the Chairman, had played such an important role in bringing about that result. He hoped that the Preparatory Sub-Committee, and later the Conference, would be able to reach constructive results in an area of utmost importance to the membership of the United Nations.

17. Although the delegations on whose behalf he was speaking had supported the draft resolution, they continued to have reservations about certain elements of the text. In particular, they had serious reservations with regard to paragraph 4, feeling strongly that all decisions concerning the holding of conferences outside the regular forums of the United Nations should be made in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/140, which stated that additional costs arising from such decisions should not be borne by the regular budget.

18. Mrs. YAMAZAKI (Japan) said that her delegation had supported the draft resolution because it supported the goals of the Decade and the main thrust of the draft. However, it had reservations concerning paragraph 4.

19. Mr. ALMOSLECHNER (Austria) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution and trusted that the further preparatory work and the Conference itself would achieve the desired goal.

20. He hoped that that financial arrangement referred to in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution would remain a one-time exception to the provisions laid down in General Assembly resolutions 2609 (XXIV) and 31/140. Having taken note of the financial implications set forth in document A/C.3/37/L.10, he would like to see the Fifth Committee consider and clarify the basic question arising out of paragraph 4 of the draft resolution.

21. Mr. BOUFFANDEAU (France) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution, since it wished to see the broadest possible participation in the Conference. However, it had reservations concerning paragraph 4, believing that the additional costs arising from the holding of conferences away from United Nations centres should be met in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2609 (XXIV).

22. Mr. GERSHMAN (United States of America) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/37/L.4 when it had been

(Mr. Gershman, United States)

presented to the Economic and Social Council's first regular session of 1982. The modifications that had since been made in the text did not justify a change in his delegation's position. The United States generally did not participate in votes related to the Decade because of the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 3379 (XXX) labelling zionism a form of racism. His delegation's rejection of that repugnant idea continued to be relevant in the present context, as illustrated by paragraph 7 (i), which contained an invitation to committees established in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

23. His delegation had decided to participate in the vote and to vote against the draft resolution because of the financial implications of paragraph 4. Although his country sympathized with the desire of developing countries to host United Nations conferences, it firmly believed that the United Nations must make the best possible use of all the resources at its disposal, including its established conference centres, especially where such use led to the saving of funds. In a time of fiscal austerity and budget stringency, his delegation adhered more strongly than ever to General Assembly resolution 2609 (XXIV), which required host Governments to pay the full additional costs of holding a United Nations conference away from a United Nations centre. The exemption granted in paragraph 4 to the host Government was therefore unacceptable. Moreover, his delegation considered it inappropriate for the United Nations to pay the travel costs of organizations labelled national liberation movements. It therefore objected to the budget item for that purpose contained in document A/C.3/37/L.10.

24. In conclusion, he emphasized that his delegation's vote against the draft resolution did not in any way diminish its high regard for the way in which the Chairman and the Secretary-General of the Conference had conducted the negotiations on the text.

25. Mr. NORDENFELT (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, expressed his satisfaction that a compromise solution had been found, so that those delegations had been able to vote in favour of the draft resolution. The Nordic countries had always supported the goals of the Decade as set out in General Assembly resolution 3057 (XXVIII), which continued to be the most appropriate basis for the common struggle against racism and racial discrimination. They therefore maintained strong reservations with regard to the divisive issues which had been brought into the context of the Decade at the first World Conference.

26. Furthermore, the Nordic countries had serious reservations concerning paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, since they felt that all decisions concerning the holding of meetings away from regular forums should be made in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/140. They also felt that the mandates of some of the United Nations organs invited to participate as observers at the Conference did not seem to be of direct relevance to the aims of the Conference.

27. Mr. AL-QAYSI (Iraq) said that his delegation had wanted to retain all the subparagraphs in item 10 of the draft provisional agenda but had supported the amendment in order to ensure the broadest possible participation in the Conference

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(Mr. Al-Qaysi, Iraq)

and thereby help to make it a success. It had voted in favour of the draft resolution on the understanding that item 10 referred to racist practices everywhere.

28. Mr. O'DONOVAN (Ireland) reaffirmed his delegation's abhorrence of racial discrimination and apartheid, its support for the original aims of the Decade as contained in General Assembly resolution 3057 (XXVIII), and its view that the complicated political situation in the Middle East should not be assimilated to the situation in South Africa. He was therefore gratified that it had been possible to reach agreement on the draft provisional agenda, which had presented difficulties in its original form. His delegation had voted in favour of the draft on the understanding that paragraph 5 superseded the general endorsement in paragraph 1, of resolution 1982/32 of the Economic and Social Council, and, in that connection, it had taken note of the statement made by the Chairman. If there had been a separate vote on paragraph 4, his delegation would have abstained. It also had reservations concerning paragraph 7 (i) for reasons explained earlier.

29. Mr. KHALIFA (Sudan) regretted that his delegation had not been present at the vote. If it had been present, it would have voted in favour of the draft resolution.

30. Mrs. de ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution but had reservations concerning paragraph 4.

31. Mr. LU Zongqing (China) observed that the section on the activities of the Department of Public Information in document A/C.3/37/L.10 made no mention of Chinese, one of the official and working languages of the United Nations. In many forums, his Government had requested that there should be an increase in the Chinese editions of publications and a strengthening of the Chinese translation services. It had also asked that all conferences held outside regular United Nations forums should have radio programmes in Chinese. He therefore requested that all activities connected with the Conference at Manila, including publications and radio programmes, should make use of Chinese, and he hoped that the Secretariat would heed that request.

32. Mr. AZANTI (Ghana) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution on the clear understanding that those delegations which had had difficulties with the draft provisional agenda would now be able and willing to participate in the work of the Preparatory Sub-Committee and the Conference itself. His delegation believed that the Conference, which represented a further attempt to eradicate racism, racial discrimination and apartheid, should be a world-wide event and should be seen as such.

33. Mrs. EL-ALI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that her delegation had wished to maintain the original draft provisional agenda but had, in a spirit of compromise, voted in favour of the draft resolution as amended. However, it reserved its right to raise the question of racial discrimination regardless of where it occurred,

(Mrs. El-Ali, Syrian Arab Republic)

whether in Namibia, in Palestine or in other occupied Arab territories. There was no change in her delegation's basic position as expressed in the Preparatory Sub-Committee.

34. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had concluded its consideration of agenda item 76.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.